PENROD

(Continued.)

At the close of the afternoon services he did not go home, but proceeded to squander the funds just withheld from China upon an orgy of the most pungently forbidden description. In a drug emporium near the church he purchased a five cent sack of candy consisting for the most part of the heavily flavored hoofs of horned cattle, but undeniably substantial, and so generously capable of resisting solution that the purchaser must needs be avaricious beyond reason who did not realize his money's worth.

Equipped with this collation Penrod contributed his remaining nickel to a picture show, countenanced upon the seventh day by the legal but not the moral authorities. Here, in cozy darkness, he placidly insulted his liver with jawbreaker upon jawbreaker from the paper sack and in a surfeit of content watched the silent actors on the screen.

One film made a lasting impression upon him. It depicted with relentless pathos the drunkard's progress, beginning with his conversion to beer in the company of loose traveling men, pursuing him through an inexplicable lapse into evening clothes and the society of some remarkably painful ladies. Next, exhibiting the effects of alcohol on the victim's domestic disposition, the unfortunate man was seen in the act of striking his wife and, subsequently, his pleading baby daughter with an abnormally heavy walking stick. Their flight through the snow to seek the protection of a

Equipped With This Collation Penrod Contributed His Remaining Nickel to a Picture Show.

relative was shown and, finally, the drunkard's picturesque behavior at the institute of a madhouse.

So fascinated was Penrod that he postponed his departure until this film came round again, by which time he had finished his unnatural repast and, at least, but not quite, decided against following the profession of a drunkard when he grew up.

Emerging, satiated, from the theater, a public timepiece before a jeweler's store confronted him with an unexplained dial and imminent perplexities. How was he to explain at home these hours of dalliance? There was a rule fast rule that he return direct from Sunday school, and Sunday rules were important because on that day there was his father, always at home and at hand, perilously ready for action. One of the hardest conditions of boyhood is the almost continuous strain put upon the powers of invention by the constant and harassing necessity for explanations of every natural act.

Proceeding homeward through the deepening twilight as rapidly as possible, at a gait half skip and half canter, Penrod made up his mind in what manner he would account for his long delay, and as he drew nearer rehearsed in words the opening passage of his defense.

"Now, see here," he determined to begin, "I do not wish to be blamed for things I couldn't help nor any other boy. I was going along the street by a cottage and a lady put her head out of the window and said her husband was drunk, and whipping her and her little girl, and she asked me wouldn't I come in and help hold him. So I went in and tried to get hold of this drunken lady's husband where he was whipping their baby daughter, but he wouldn't pay any attention, and I told her I ought to be getting home, but she kep' on askin' me to stay"—

At this point he reached the corner of his own yard, where a coincidence not only checked the rehearsal of his eloquence but happily obviated all occasion for it. A cab from the station drew up in front of the gate, and there descended a troubled lady in black and a fragile little girl about three. Mrs. Schofield rushed from the house and enfolded both in hospitable arms.

They were Penrod's Aunt Clara and cousin, also Clara, from Dayton, Ill., and in the flurry of their arrival everybody forgot to put Penrod to the question. It is doubtful, however, if he felt any relief; there may have been even a slight, unconscious disappointment, not altogether dissimilar to that of an actor deprived of a good part.

In the course of some really necessary preparations for dinner he stepped from the bathroom into the pink and white bedchamber of his sister and addressed her rather thickly through a towel.

"When'd mamma find out Aunt Clara and Cousin Clara were coming?"

"Not till she saw them from the window. She just happened to look out as they drove up. Aunt Clara telegraphed this morning, but it wasn't delivered."

"How long they goin' to stay?"

"I don't know."

Penrod ceased to rub his shining face and thoughtfully tossed the towel through the bathroom door. "Uncle John won't try to make 'em come back home, I guess, will he?" (Uncle John was Aunt Clara's husband, a successful manufacturer of stoves, and his lifelong regret was that he had not entered the Baptist ministry.) "He'll let 'em stay here quietly, won't he?"

"What are you talking about?" demanded Margaret, turning from her mirror. "Uncle John sent them here. Why shouldn't he let them stay?"

Penrod looked crestfallen. "Then he hasn't taken to drink?"

"Certainly not!" She emphasized the denial with a pretty peal of soprano laughter.

"Then why," asked her brother gloomily, "why did Aunt Clara look so worried when she got here?"

"Good gracious! Don't people worry about anything except somebody's drinking? Where did you get such an idea?"

"Well," he persisted, "you don't know it ain't that."

She laughed again, whole heartedly. "Poor Uncle John! He won't even allow grape juice or ginger ale in his house. They came because they were afraid little Clara might catch the measles. She's very delicate, and there's such an epidemic of measles among the children over in Dayton the schools had to be closed. Uncle John got so worried that last night he dreamed about it, and this morning he couldn't stand it any longer and packed them off over here, though he thinks it's wicked to travel on Sunday. And Aunt Clara was worried when she got here because they'd forgotten to check her trunk, and it will have to be sent by express. Now, what in the name of common sense put it into your head that Uncle John had taken to"—

"Oh, nothing!" He turned lifelessly away and went downstairs, a newborn hope dying in his bosom. Life seems so needlessly dull sometimes.

CHAPTER V.

School.

NEXT morning, when he had once more resumed the dreadful burden of education, it seemed infinitely duller. And yet what pleasanter sight is there than a schoolroom well filled with children of those sprouting years just before the teens? The casual visitor, gazing from the teacher's platform upon these busy little heads, needs only a blunted memory to experience the most agreeable and exhilarating sensations. Still, for the greater part the children are unconscious of the happiness of their condition, for nothing is more pathetically true than that we "never know when we are well off." The boys in a public school are less aware of their happy state than are the girls, and of all the boys in his room probably Penrod himself had the least appreciation of his felicity.

He sat staring at an open page of a textbook, but not studying, not even reading, not even thinking. Nor was he lost in a reverie. His mind's eye was shut, as his physical eye might well have been, for the optic nerve, flaccid with ennui, conveyed nothing whatever of the printed page upon which the orb of vision was partially focused. Penrod was doing something very unusual and rare, something almost never accomplished except by colored people or by a boy in school on a spring day—he was doing really nothing at all. He was merely a state of being.

From the street a sound stole in through the open window, and abhorring nature began to fill the vacuum called Penrod Schofield, for the sound was the spring song of a mouth organ coming down the sidewalk. The windows were intentionally above the level of the eyes of the seated pupils, but the picture of the musician was plain to Penrod, painted for him by a quality in the runs and trills partaking of the oboe, of the calliope and of cats in anguish—an excruciating sweetness obtained only by the wallowing, walloping yellow-pink palm of a hand whose back was Kongo black and shiny. The music came down the street and passed beneath the window, accompanied by the care free shuffling of a pair of old shoes scuffing syncopations on the cement sidewalk. It passed into the distance; became faint and blurred; was gone. Emotion stirred in Penrod a great and poignant desire, but (perhaps fortunately) no fairy godmother made her appearance. Otherwise Penrod would have gone down the street in a black skin, playing the mouth organ, and an unprepared colored youth would have found himself enjoying educational advantages for which he had no ambition whatever.

Roused from perfect apathy, the boy cast about the schoolroom an eye wearied to nausea by the perpetual vision of the neat teacher upon the platform, the backs of the heads of the pupils in front of him and the monotonous stretches of blackboard threateningly defaced by arithmetical formula and other insignia of torture. Above the blackboard the walls of the high room were of white plaster—white with the qualified whiteness of old snow in a soft coal town. This dismal expanse was broken by four lithographic portraits, votive offerings of a thoughtful publisher. The portraits were of good and great men, kind men, men who loved children. Their faces were noble and benevolent. But the lithographs offered the only rest for the eyes of children fatigued by the everlasting sameness of the schoolroom. Long day after long day, interminable week in and interminable week out, vast month on vast month, the pupils sat with those four portraits beaming kindness down upon them. The faces became permanent in the consciousness of the children; they became an obsession. In and out of school the children were never free of them. The four faces haunted the minds of children falling asleep. They hung upon the minds of children waking at night; they rose forebodingly in the minds of children waking in the morning; they became monstrously alive in the minds of children lying sick of fever. Never while the children of that schoolroom lived would they be able to forget one detail of the four lithographs. The hand of Longfellow was fixed for them forever in his beard. And by a simple and unconscious association of ideas Penrod Schofield was accumulating an antipathy for the gentle Longfellow, and for James Russell Lowell, and for Oliver Wendell Holmes, and for John Greenleaf Whittier which would never permit him to peruse a work of one of those great New Englanders without a feeling of personal resentment.

His eyes fell slowly and inimically from the brow of Whittier to the braid of reddish hair belonging to Victorine Riordan, the little octoroon girl who sat directly in front of him. Victorine's back was as familiar to Penrod as the necktie of Oliver Wendell Holmes. So was her gayly colored plaid waist. He hated the waist as he hated Victorine herself without knowing why. Enforced companionship in large quantities and on an equal basis between the sexes appears to gradlize the affections, and schoolroom romances are few.

Victorine's hair was thick and the brickish glints in it were beautiful, but Penrod was very tired of it. A tiny knot of green ribbon finished off the braid and kept it from unraveling, and beneath the ribbon there was a final wisp of hair which was just long enough to repose upon Penrod's desk when Victorine leaned back in her seat. It was there now. Thoughtfully he took the braid between thumb and forefinger and, without disturbing Victorine, dipped the end of it and the green ribbon into the inkwell of his desk. He brought hair and ribbon forth dripping purple ink and partially dried them on a blotter, though, a moment later, when Victorine leaned forward, they were still able to add a few picturesque touches to the plaid waist.

Rudolph Krsuss, across the aisle from Penrod, watched the operation with protuberant eyes, fascinated. Inspired to imitation, he took a piece of chalk from his pocket and wrote "Rats" across the shoulder blades of the boy in front of him, then looked across appealingly to Penrod for tokens of congratulation. Penrod yawned.

Half the members of the class passed out to a recitation room, the empurpled Victorine among them, and Miss Spence started the remaining half through the ordeal of trial by mathematics. Several boys and girls were sent to the blackboard, and Penrod, spared for the moment, followed their operations a little while with his eyes, but not with his mind; then, sinking deeper in his seat, limply abandoned the effort. His eyes remained open, but saw nothing. The routine of the arithmetic lesson reached his ears in familiar, meaningless sounds, but he heard nothing, and yet, this time, he was profoundly occupied. He had drifted away from the painful land of facts, and floated now in a new sea of fancy which he had just discovered.

Maturity forgets the marvelous realness of a boy's day dreams, how colorful they glow, rosy and living, and how opaque the curtain closing down between the dreamer and the actual world. That curtain is almost sound proof, too, and causes more throat trouble among parents than is suspected.

The nervous monotony of the schoolroom inspires a sometimes unbearable longing for something astonishing to happen, and as every boy's fundamental desire is to do something astonishing himself, so as to be the center of all human interest and awe, it was natural that Penrod should discover in fancy the delightful secret of self levitation. He found, in this curious series of imaginings, during the lesson in arithmetic, that the atmosphere may be navigated as by a swimmer under water, but with infinitely greater ease and with perfect comfort in breathing. In his mind he extended his arms gracefully, at a level with his shoulders, and delicately paddled the air with his hands, which at once caused him to be drawn up out of his seat and elevated gently to a position about midway between the floor and the ceiling, where he came to an equilibrium and floated; a sensation not the less exquisite because of the screams of his fellow pupils, appalled by the miracle. Miss Spence herself was amazed and frightened, but he only smiled down carelessly upon her when she commanded him to return to earth, and then, when she climbed upon a desk to pull him down, he quietly paddled himself a little higher, leaving his toes just out of her reach. Next he swam through a few slow somersaults to show his mastery of the new art, and, with the shouting of the dumfounded scholars ringing in his ears, turned on his side and floated swiftly out of the window, immediately rising above the housetops, while people in the street below him shrieked, and a trolley car stopped dead in wonder.

With almost no exertion he paddled himself, many yards at a stroke, to the girls' private school where Marjorie Jones was a pupil—Marjorie Jones of the amber curls and the golden voice! Long before the "Pageant of the Table Round" she had offered Penrod a hundred proofs that she considered him wholly undesirable and ineligible. At the Friday afternoon dancing class she consistently incited and led the laughter at him whenever Professor Bartet singled him out for admonition in matters of feet and decorum. And but yesterday she had chided him for his slavish lack of memory in daring to offer her greeting on the way to Sunday school. "Well, I expect you must forgot I told you never to speak to me again! If I was a boy I'd be too proud to come hanging around people that don't speak to me, even if I was the worst boy in town!" So she flouted him. But now as he floated in through the window of her classroom and swam gently along the ceiling like an escaped toy balloon she fell upon her knees beside her little desk and, lifting up her arms toward him, cried with love and admiration:

"Oh, Penrod!"

He negligently kicked a globe from the high chandelier and, smiling coldly, floated out through the hall to the front steps of the school, while Marjorie followed, imploring him to grant her one kind look.

In the street an enormous crowd had gathered, headed by Miss Spence and a brass band, and a cheer from a hundred thousand throats shook the very ground as Penrod swam overhead. Marjorie knelt upon the steps and watched adoringly while Penrod took the drum major's baton and, performing sinuous evolutions above the crowd, led the band. Then he threw the baton so high that it disappeared from sight. But he went swiftly after it, a double delight, for he had not only the delicious sensation of rocketing safely up and up into the blue sky, but also that of standing in the crowd below, watching and admiring himself as he dwindled to a speck, disappeared and then, emerging from a cloud, came speeding down, with the baton in his hand, to the level of the treetops, where he beat time for the band and the vast throng and Marjorie Jones, who all united in the "Star Spangled Banner" in honor of his aerial achievements. It was a great moment.

It was a great moment, but something seemed to threaten it. The face of Miss Spence looking up from the crowd grew too vivid—unpleasantly vivid. She was beckoning him and shouting: "Come down, Penrod Schofield! Penrod Schofield, come down here!" He could hear her above the band and the singing of the multitude. She seemed intent on spoiling everything. Marjorie Jones was weeping to show how sorry she was that she had formerly slighted him and throwing kisses to prove that she loved him, but Miss Spence kept jumping between him and Marjorie, incessantly calling his name.

He grew more and more irritated with her. He was the most important person in the world and was engaged in proving it to Marjorie Jones and the whole city, and yet Miss Spence seemed to feel she still had the right to order him about as she did in the old days when he was an ordinary schoolboy. He was furious. He was sure

"Penrod Schofield! Penrod Schofield, come down here!"

she wanted him to do something disagreeable. It seemed to him that she had screamed "Penrod Schofield!" thousands of times.

From the beginning of his aerial experiments in his own schoolroom he had not opened his lips, knowing somehow that one of the requirements for air floating is perfect silence on the part of the floater; but, finally, irritated beyond measure by Miss Spence's clamorous insistence, he was unable to restrain an indignant rebuke and immediately came to earth with a frightful bump.

(To Be Continued.)

Harry Thaw is willing to admit that the last jury is sane.

Bits of Byplay

By Luke McLuke

Paw Knows Everything.

Willie—Paw, do you know everything?

Paw—Yes, my son. Why do you ask?

Willie—I just wanted to know if you could refer to a champagne drunk as a high tide?

Paw—You go down and fix the furnace, young man.

Orful!

Between the cost of food and rents,
No wonder poor man hollers;
He seems to earn his coin in cents,
But has to spend in dollars.

Mean Brute!

"What caused Mr. Smith to become a woman hater?" asked Mrs. Gabb.

"He was married once, I believe," replied Mr. Gabb.

Huh!

Another thought has just occurred
To me, and you shall reap it.
Why do we take a fellow's word
When we want him to keep it?

Ouch!

"I'll bet that you often miss me since you started to shave yourself," remarked the barber, who was trimming the hair of the former regular customer.

"Oh, no, I don't!" replied the former regular customer. "I always fill my eyes and my mouth with lather before I start to shave and I talk to myself while I am shaving."

He's Him.

It's easy enough to be pleasant,
When things break your way all is well,
But the man worth while
Is the man who can smile
When you attend a dinner and your name
Is on the list of speakers, and the man
Who speaks just ahead of you gets up
and tells the story
That you were all ready to tell.

Names Is Names.

Miss Iva Pain lives at Painesville, O.

You Know Him.

His manners he won't try to mend,
He is a stubborn gent;
And he would rather lose a friend
Than lose an argument.

An Apt Answer.

The questions and answers column editor of the Temple Telegram frequently gives some excellent replies to the questions propounded, and the following is worth more than passing notice:

"Q. What has become of the old fashioned girl who used to have to read a certain number of verses in the Bible each night before she went to bed?—Grandma.

"A. She has grown up and now has a daughter who crawls out in the morning about 8 or 9 o'clock and reads Luke McLuke's column before breakfast."—Brady (Tex.) Standard.

Things to Worry About.

It takes a snail three days, four hours, five minutes and ten seconds to travel a mile.

Our Daily Special.

Never sell experience for less than you paid for it.

Luke McLuke Says:

A whole lot of people who are merely careful want a lot of credit for being good.

You never hear a man complaining that time flies too fast after he has given his order to a waiter.

A short talk with a man usually develops the information that he is short himself.

Bring up a child in the way he should go and he will get there.

The lad who is always announcing that clothes do not make the man is the same fellow who dodges you when you look seedy.

Nature doesn't make all the fools. She merely furnishes the raw material and lets some woman do the rest.

When a girl refuses to marry a man it jars her to see him later on looking happy and contented. By rights he should go to the dogs or waste away to a mere skeleton.

Every now and then a woman marries a man because he needs a good wife to keep him straight.

When it comes to doing wonderful things with figures the dressmaker makes the professor of mathematics look like a piker.

Nine out of ten baldheaded men will tell you that worry made them that way, and yet they are always claiming that their wives are always worrying over nothing. And their wives are not wearing toupees.

Any horse faced woman can tell you that the lack of wrinkles on a woman's face denotes weakness of character.

You might discover a man who was satisfied with the government and the taxes and the weather, but you can't find one who doesn't think that his wife talks too much.

A compliment has the same effect on a woman that a glass of champagne has on a man.

The reason why so few women can whistle is because you can't talk and whistle at the same time.

One thing we don't like about society is that it is considered bad form for a woman to shake hands with you as though she meant it.

Half the women are trying to get married and the other half are trying to get divorced.

Why is it that when a man is trying to make an impression on a girl he acts as though he was ashamed of the fact that he is married?

Our fathers thought of the word "cellar" as a place to store vegetables in. The present generation regards it as the habitation of an un unsuccessful ball team.

The prospective deficit in the postal service must be encouraging to all who want new routes, public buildings and other favors, as it indicates that the government is able to and willing to stand the loss.

NOTICE.

Bridgeport Hydraulic Company, No. 820 Main Street.

Water rates for the quarter ending July 1st, 1915, are now due and payable at the office of the company, No. 820 Main street. All bills must be paid on or before July 15th, 1915....

Business hours on Saturdays from 8 a. m. to 12 m.

For the accommodation of the public the office will be kept open from 8 a. m. to 8 p. m. Tuesday, July 6th and Monday, July 12th, 1915.

ALBERT E. LAVERY,
t* Secretary.